the hospital in Cuzco. She informed me that in her village there was neither a physician nor a nurse. Had she not been en route to the city, she said, she would not have consulted her village healer until convinced that the boy was really sick.

This experience in international medicine was very different from that in equatorial Africa. With fewer exotic parasites to challenge me in Guyana, many intimate interpersonal exposures offered more than compensating rewards. Though sepa-

rated not only by the broad Atlantic Ocean but as well by language, race, customs and, indeed, by centuries of time, Africa and South America are joined by people who share the same, often desperate, need for modern health care. Therein lies the essential ingredient of a satisfying medical adventure.

REFERENCE

1. Minkowski WL: An American physician in rural West Africa. West J Med 1981 Mar; 134:267-272

Medical Practice Questions

Bone Densitometry

QUESTION:

Is bone densitometry an effective diagnostic tool?

OPINION:

It is the opinion of the Advisory Panels on Internal Medicine and Orthopedics that bone densitometry is an effective tool for measuring bone density and, therefore, is an accurate and sensitive means of following changes in density during the course of disease. It may be used as an adjunct to diagnostic procedures for osteoporosis and allied conditions. Because its use must be well controlled to be accurate and the equipment necessary for the procedure is moderately expensive, the indications for use should be documented.